

THE DILEMMA THAT RACISM POSES FOR BRITAIN

The Shadow Athwart the Commonwealth

Labor's Colonial Heritage

RITA HINDEN

IN THE spring of 1950, world opinion was gripped by the story of an African chief who had married a white woman and was then exiled by the British government from his "kingdom." This episode has probably already been forgotten in the disturbing events that have taken place since. Even at the time, to most people it was little more than a romantic affair in which the British authorities played the part of the race-prejudiced villain.

Yet the Seretse case was something very much more than that. Britain's unfortunate action must be comprehended against the background of the most important of all problems in Africa (perhaps in the world!) today: the clash between the doctrine of white supremacy and the opposing doctrine

BOTH internally and in its bearing on the present international struggle, the race problem looms large for the British Commonwealth of Nations. The countries of the former Empire and present Commonwealth include both South Africa, which is attempting to extend white supremacy over larger and larger sections of Africa, and India, which has been an active defender of the colored peoples and the chief opponent of South Africa at sessions of the United Nations. Between the two is England's Labor government, which is trying to lead her African colonies toward self-government, while not provoking a violent reaction either in South Africa or among the white settlers in the colonial areas. RITA HINDEN, Secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau in London, and author of many books and articles on Britain's colonial problems, here reviews the developing crisis in British Africa. In a companion article, BARNET LITVINOFF, British journalist who is now press officer with the Jewish Agency in London, describes the explosive situation created in one African colony where the British government has been trying to protect the interests of the natives.

of race equality. In deciding to ban Seretse Khama from the chieftainship, the British were concerned with something very much bigger than the fate of one man—they were faced with all the excited emotions that the struggle between the white and the colored races is now capable of engendering. Instead of firmly taking one side or the other, the government boggled and brought universal condemnation on its head. But when one understands just why it was that a progressive-minded government did flounder and blunder in this fashion, one has in one's hand the key to an understanding of the essential problem of the British Commonwealth in the mid-20th century.

THERE is nothing new in black and white being in conflict in Africa. But in recent years the tension has been heightened out of all recognition by a series of new developments. The first of these is the emergence, phoenix-like, of the new inter-racial Commonwealth out of the old, decaying British Empire. Few people have really grasped the fact that the British Commonwealth of 1951 is largely peopled by Asians. It contains about 500,000,000 Asians and Africans as against 75,000,000 Europeans.* In 1945 the free Commonwealth was predominantly European—the only substantial non-European community was the 8,000,000 Africans in the Union of South Africa (who are sub-citizens). It was made up of the Dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, with Britain as the metropolitan center, whose status differed from the rest only insofar as it was *primus inter pares*. In essence this was an Anglo-Saxon alliance, and the world regarded it as

*The Commonwealth—let it be absolutely clear—comprises only self-governing Dominions; the territories still dependent are known as the Colonial Empire, and have a population of about 60,000,000, almost all of colored race.

such. Today three Asiatic Dominions have been added—India, Pakistan, and Ceylon—with a population about six times as great as the Anglo-Saxons in the other Dominions, including Britain herself, and have been accepted as of equal status.

Looked at from any point of view this has been a staggering change, and it is only the beginning of a process still unfolding itself. It can hardly be many years before the West Indies, with a further 3,000,000 colored people, federate and achieve Dominion status. Their emergence to independence will be followed hot on the heels by the independent status (as Dominions—if Britain handles the matter wisely enough) of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone, with approximately 30,000,000 Africans. Then there is Malaya, with a further 5,000,000 Asians, who can no longer stomach any form of colonialism. Bit by bit these dependencies will throw off the last shackles, and the hope then is that they will choose to join the fraternal association of the Commonwealth. This is the ideal that lies behind progressive thought on imperial policy in Britain today, and it is inherent in this ideal that all the Dominions should be absolutely equal in status, irrespective of the races which inhabit them. The ideal is something more than a remote utopia. In part, it is already a fact, and where it is not yet a fact there are active forces working ardently for the day when it will be. Look at it as one will, the reality is that the population of this vast potential Commonwealth of the future will be overwhelmingly of colored race, unless the Commonwealth is to disintegrate.

THE second development contributing to race tensions in Africa today is the phenomenal advance of West Africa. The people of the West African colonies are crowding into a generation what has usually been the progress of a century. At the outbreak of war in 1939, they had practically no representation in the governments of their countries, and certainly no responsibility; power was concentrated in the hands of British officials appointed in faraway Lon-

don. In the civil service the natives were confined to the junior ranks. Their opportunities for education were deplorably few; there were no universities and only a handful of wealthy individuals could find their way overseas to study in Europe and America. A wage-earning class was only beginning to crystallize, and it was not organized into trade unions which could protect it from even the gross exploitation that was its lot. Local government was undemocratic in nature and primitive in function, and social services quite elementary. The old evils of illiteracy, disease, and prejudice stalked the countryside, and what nationalist movement there was, was in its veriest infancy. On every standard of what is usually accepted as "civilized" life, West Africa was still part of the Dark Continent.

It would be too much to say that all this is a thing of the past, but the change in these ten years has been revolutionary. Each colony has engaged in a fundamental and exciting political advance. In the Gold Coast, Africans now completely dominate the legislature and hold eight out of eleven cabinet posts. Nigeria is to undergo a similar startling change before the end of the year. These countries are now on the very threshold of independence.

Under our eyes effective power is being transferred from white officialdom to black political leaders, and if certain reserved powers still rest with British governors, they know better than to use them against the will of the people, and they recognize too that it is only a matter of a few years until these, also, are transferred. The civil services are being rapidly Africanized; hundreds of Africans are already holding senior posts and thousands more are being trained to do so. Each West African colony has its University College, and hundreds of scholarships are available for overseas study. Local government is everywhere being reformed; trade unions—and militant ones, at that—are the order of the day. Powerful national movements and an aggressive press dominate public thought. In spite of the virulent propaganda that "nothing has been done," intel-

ligent Africans know in their blood that they are entering a new world of freedom—there are many, even, who are secretly afraid of the pace.

AT THE other end of Africa lie the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, and here is the source of the third factor in a very dangerous situation. As opposed to the inter-racial ideals inspiring the Commonwealth as a whole, and the attainment of equality for the black races in West Africa, the Union of South Africa stands increasingly for white supremacy. Ever since it achieved independent Dominion status in 1910, South Africa has pursued a policy of discrimination against its large native majority. Since the advent of Dr. Daniel F. Malan as prime minister in 1948, things have gone from bad to worse, but it would be a mistake to think that any political party with any prospect of power in the Union would act fundamentally otherwise. Colored people are deprived of the most basic civil rights; they are segregated in special areas of the country and in special "locations" in the towns; they are deprived of opportunities of acquiring skills; politically and economically they are outcast. The 2,000,000 South African Europeans are in daily fear of being swamped by the 8,000,000 majority of the colored race. They see themselves as the torchbearers of European civilization in Africa and, in their view, they are justified in defending what they consider a superior culture against the sea of "barbarians" that surrounds them. So long as they hold this view—and as the colored people strengthen in numbers and education and economic progress they will hold to it in increasing fearfulness—there is no hope short of bloodshed of any basic change in South African native policy.

Southern Rhodesia (which in political status lies somewhere between a Dominion and a colony) has 150,000 Europeans and less than 2,000,000 natives. Its mood is different only in degree from that of South Africa. It also pursues a policy of racial discrimination, and Britain has found herself

less and less able to intervene, though legally she still has the right to do so. What is happening in West Africa is anathema to all these white people of the South of Africa; what the latter are doing is an atrocity to the black people of Nigeria and the Gold Coast. The two processes are utterly incompatible.

WHAT happens in the long stretch of Africa that lies between South Africa and the progressive territories in the North? There is a chain of British colonies—Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Kenya—where, owing to high altitude and suitable soil and climate, European communities have found it possible to settle. They form alien islands in the heart of an African ocean of population, and are fiercely separatist in their cultural and political demands. Not only that, but Indians have taken root there, too, more numerous than the Europeans, but hardly less separatist. Both European and Indian communities are, in size, the merest fraction of the African, but the African is less educated, less skilled in politics and economic techniques, and he finds himself in an inferior position—a more or less despised race—from whatever angle he looks at it.

This is a problem which, in itself, is surpassingly difficult to handle. How deal with the complexities of political representation and democratic institutions where people of three entirely different cultures and standards must find expression? What of the education system, and medical services—where customs, languages, religions sharply divide group from group? Can the three races meet on an equality in the civil services?

Complex as all this is, it is made many times more intractable by the opposing developments elsewhere in Africa. The European communities in East and Central Africa are infected by the assertive policy of the Europeans in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia—it is perhaps only natural that, with this example before their eyes, they should jib at having to consider the colored races at all, and should resent the efforts of London to hold them back from unbridled

supremacy. They are bitter at having so much less power than people of their own kind next door. The greatest cry for self-government today in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia comes not from the Africans but from the Europeans, who consider the Colonial Office to be their greatest enemy. For them, British control implies a deliberate watering-down of their own desires in the interests of Africans whom they despise as in every way their inferiors. The Africans, on the other hand, though suspicious of Britain and anxious to exercise responsibility on their own account, are fully aware that without London holding the ring, they would fall under the domination of Europeans or Indians or both, and repeat the sorry story of their fellow Africans farther south. Since Dr. Malan has been in office, deliberate attempts have been made to stir up white opinion in the British colonies; there has even been talk of Europeans banding together "on a common color platform" and on more than one occasion the white groups have made a direct appeal to the Union over the head of Britain. The more domineering and intransigent South African Europeans become, the more Kenyan and Rhodesian Europeans rebel against the bit that British control has put between their teeth.

In the meantime, the African people of these East African colonies are not quiescent. They may lack the tools of knowledge and wealth which the Europeans possess, but they have eyes to see and ears to hear and they know where the shoe pinches. They have heard of the new status of Indians and Ceylonese and Indonesians and Burmese; and tales are told of what is happening in West Africa. No East African can expect to be content with his menial lot when he knows that across the continent other Africans are achieving the highest posts in the administration and straining over the last inches separating them from an imminent independence. In West Africa there are now hundreds of African administrators, judges, doctors—let alone legislators; in East Africa there are practically none. There the

civil service has resolutely refused to open its highest administrative grades to Africans, whereas in West Africa not only are the grades open but there is equal pay for the job. Under the impact of these and a hundred other facts, the Africans are increasingly restive, and their discontent is matched by the discontent of the European settlers, for opposite reasons.

IN THIS uneasy situation, Britain should long ago have given an unequivocal lead. Unfortunately, she has allowed herself to drift on a sea of ambiguities. The Europeans are encouraged thus far, and no further; the Africans are protected thus far, and no further; the Indians are sometimes courted and sometimes spurned. The result is obvious. Britain is constantly accused by each race of favoring the other, and is trusted by no one. There is something of the same desire to hold the balance between races that was so disastrous in Palestine through the twenty-five disturbed years of the British Mandate. The political institutions being evolved have no clear vision of a possible accommodation between the races, and are not designed to bring it about; policy goes no further than holding the ring against conflicting claims. What the Africans fear more than anything in East Africa is the alienation of their land, which has followed in the past on European immigration and settlement. What the Europeans want more than anything is the acquisition of land, so that their numbers may increase and their community strengthen its political power. To neither of these claims does Britain give a satisfactory answer. She has clamped down on large-scale alienation of land, and immigration is firmly limited. But *sufficient* alienation continues, and *sufficient* immigrants trickle in to disturb the Africans' sense of confidence. It is Palestine all over again! And, as is inevitable when policy is ambiguous, tensions mount and relations deteriorate.

It was against a similar background that the Seretse case occurred. It so happens that Britain still has control of three small Protectorates in the South African region—two,

Basutoland and Swaziland, are actually surrounded by Union territory; and the third, Bechuanaland (in which Seretse's territory lies) borders on South Africa. On every ground of economic or administrative common sense, these protectorates should be incorporated in the Union, and, indeed, under the South Africa Act of 1910, which gave the Union independent status, it was agreed that they would one day be transferred to South African control. But the day for the transfer was left open and Britain has never found it right or expedient to transfer the protectorates, because of the deterioration in South African native policy. It would have been a betrayal of the African peoples, with whom Britain had long-standing treaty commitments, to hand them over to the fierce race hatred of South Africa. Yet it has not been easy to administer these distant lands, which, economically, are anything but viable units, and all the time South Africa is putting forward increasingly insistent claims for their incorporation.

Caught in this dilemma, the one thing Britain has wanted has been a peaceful administration of the protectorates, for there has been a very real if unspoken fear that with any trouble the South Africans would simply march in and take them over. Britain has no armed forces there to protect them, and the mere thought of open warfare with South Africa—a member of the Commonwealth—was utterly unpalatable. When Seretse planned to bring a white "queen" back to Bechuanaland, there was good reason to believe that there would be a serious split within his tribe. Civil war was actually threatened by the reigning Chief Tschekedi, Seretse's uncle, who had violently disapproved of the marriage. No doubt South African views about the mixed marriage of an African chief on her very frontiers played its part in determining the British decision to bar Seretse from the chieftainship. Whatever it was, the action was taken blunderingly and had a disastrous effect on opinion everywhere. But it is only fair to realize that something more than the position of Chief Seretse was at stake; the whole future of the

three protectorates with a population of a million souls hung in the balance; indeed it still hangs there. To allow these people to fall within South Africa's grasp—would that not have been a betrayal to arouse the whole colored world? Or would Britain really have been prepared to fight to prevent it?

THE complexities of this one case flow through to all the neighboring countries. It becomes almost impossible to adopt a simple and straightforward policy without becoming enmeshed in the endless cross-threads of this tangled pattern. If Britain wished to make self-government possible at this point in, say, Northern Rhodesia, she would merely be handing over power to a small European minority and repeating the history of the Union of South Africa. It will be remembered that in 1910, when the Union achieved an independent status, Britain was complimented on the liberality of her action after all the passions of the Boer War. Yet today there are few who are so sure that what was done in 1910 was right. The white man was given what he wanted; the black man in South Africa has, as a result, suffered from a crescendo of humiliation and demoralization. Almost certainly the same story would follow an immediate grant of independence in any Central or East African territory. At the same time to give the black man his way, even in the protectorates where the population is almost wholly black, might cause a series of mutinous upheavals in the white communities which Britain would not be prepared to put down by the force of arms, and perhaps even a military conflict with the Union of South Africa.

Here is headache enough to bedevil the peace of mind of British statesmen and officials. But the implications are even wider. How can the vision of an inter-racial Commonwealth survive a tolerance of racialism in any one part of it? India has already made known her deep concern regarding race discrimination anywhere in the Commonwealth, and has assumed a certain leadership among the colored races. It is clear enough that South Africa's increasingly discrimina-

tory race legislation, involving her attitude towards her own Indian community, is dynamite to India. Will India agree to remain within the Commonwealth at all if South African ideas travel northwards and Britain allows them to do so? There are still doubts enough about Britain's good will in India, and Pandit Nehru has had his work cut out to keep his country within the Commonwealth. It only needs a little extension of South African ideas in the British colonies north of the Union for India to find her Commonwealth membership incompatible with her own ideals—and to overthrow her association, taking with her, in all probability, Pakistan and Ceylon, and ruining Britain's last chance of a peaceful relationship with Malaya. The days of Britain in Asia will then indeed be numbered.

PROBABLY few people in Britain realize just how carefully the Indian government and people follow these racial questions elsewhere and how keenly they feel on them. And the whole question has been aggravated beyond recognition by the Korean war, which has already been entangled with the race hatred that colored people everywhere feel against the white man. Within the British Commonwealth, South Africa's continuing membership has already begun to be questioned—but not answered. All South Africa stands for is utterly incongruous with what Britain has tried to represent, and with what has made it possible for India's loyalty to be maintained. South African policy is as out of place in the context of the Commonwealth ideals of today as was Hitler's policy in the context of Western democracy in the 1930's.

And it is not as if British policy has been static in Asia and elsewhere in Africa. Britain has been actively pursuing the ideals of race equality in these areas, and has put into practice her belief that Asiatics, Africans, and West Indians are as capable of managing their own affairs as anyone else. Against this dynamic approach comes the equally dynamic anti-race-equality policy of South Africa; it does not stop short on the South

African frontier but spills over—in its emotional effects—into British terrain. Can an explosion be avoided? Should South Africa continue to be welcomed as a Commonwealth partner, flaunting the will of the United Nations in no uncertain terms, as, for example, in the case of South West Africa? Or will such tolerance in the end poison the whole structure of the Commonwealth?

There are of course many strategic and economic reasons which make an open break difficult for both sides, but it has become too serious a matter to be allowed to hang fire any longer. Is what South Africa is doing any less bad than what was done in Franco Spain? Is it easier to condone than the events behind Russia's Iron Curtain? Can we tolerate the one while we cut off relations with the second, and are prepared to go to war with the third?

Unless this problem of race can be settled within the British Commonwealth, a real tragedy faces the Western world. For the Commonwealth ideal is, after all, an inspiring one. It is one of the few adequate answers which the West can give to Communism's play on racial emotion. If, in this unique pattern of free association among races of all colors, democracy can offer some solution to the question of race, the Commonwealth will have proved its worth. How this is to be done with the Union of South Africa still retained as a participating member is the first and greatest challenge to the Commonwealth today.

Cocktail Party in East Africa

BARNET LITVINOFF

FOR many years to come the country folk of Arusha, Tanganyika, will have their most exciting bit of gossip to tell since Stanley met Livingstone high up in the Great Lakes and took the dying missionary on a boating trip.

It was not long ago that Arusha jumped out of the dark backwoods of East Africa and into the news, sending everyone in Lon-

don hastily in search of his geography book. The townlet suddenly received a visit from a Very Important British Person. This was Mr. John Dugdale, Minister of State for the colonies in the Labor administration; and every inch a British minister he looked, tall and well groomed and the sort of man you would expect to dress for dinner in the jungle, keep the Union Jack flying as though two world wars had not taken place, and as though South Africa's crusading missionary, Reverend Michael Scott, had never been near that busybody place at Lake Success to defy Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan in the interests of a few thousand indolent South African natives. The sight of Mr. Dugdale was enough to restore to the die-hard English settler in forgotten Arusha the faith that even a socialist administrator might know how to play the game. But not for long. For Mr. Dugdale, beneath that true-blue exterior, was nurturing a social atom bomb. And he elected to hurl it at that most sacred of functions—an East African cocktail party.

The minister had been engaged on a tour of British East African territories—Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, a wide and busy area containing 17,000,000 African natives, 165,000 Indian and Pakistani traders, and 45,000 Europeans. The government had lavished millions of pounds on a huge scheme for growing peanuts in East Africa that had all but collapsed, while a grant for colonial development had been in operation for some years; Mr. Dugdale wanted to see at first hand what was going on out there. Besides, the Trusteeship Council in New York had been asking some awkward questions lately, and British UN delegates were winning a reputation for vagueness and evasiveness. Some delegates—not from the other side of the Iron Curtain alone—used the term “deliberate obstruction.” So Mr. Dugdale set out to discover the facts for himself. It was at the end of his tour that he turned up at Arusha, where the British colonists, engaged for the most part in the profitable industry of sisal culture, were commiserating with themselves as the forgotten empire builders of the old country.

IT IS worth recalling at this stage that Britain first came into possession of her East African group of territories ostensibly in the course of a campaign to eradicate the slave trade, of which the sultanate of Zanzibar was an important center. The sultan's suzerainty extended inland to the Great Lakes, a domain which in the 19th century was the main reservoir for the supply of African slave labor. Britain was not yet in a colony-collecting frame of mind and restricted her vigilance to patrols by the Royal Navy and moral pressure at the court of the sultan. However, a new pace in acquisitiveness was set towards the middle of the 1890's by Imperial Germany. The kaiser, too, had faithful subjects who were intrepid explorers, and one of these was busy planting the German eagle over some of the sultan's provinces. Lord Salisbury, the British prime minister, acted swiftly. He came to an agreement with the Germans to divide the spoils, declaring Uganda and Kenya British protectorates. The Germans took Tanganyika, but this, too, was to come under British rule, as a mandated territory, after Germany's defeat in 1918.

These African territories never attracted the type of British colonist that built up Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. The climate is unsuitable for mass settlement by whites; but a few younger sons of the nobility did in the 19th century leave their stately homes to try their luck in the cultivation of cotton, sisal, and coffee. They cleared giant estates, worked industriously with armies of African natives, and sold their products to the Indian merchants in Nairobi, Mombasa, Dares-Salaam, and elsewhere on the fringe of the continent.

The English grew rich by exploiting the vast reserves of native labor. The Indian merchants were humble and thrifty, keeping their place in the commercial areas of the new towns. There was no union organization and no labor strife. To the north the Italians were having difficulties with tribal chiefs in Abyssinia; to the south the whites of Rhodesia were being harried by the British Colonial Office because they wanted Dominion status—for whites. But in the hinterland

of Tanganyika there was no one to interfere with the regime erected on the basis of race exploitation, native ignorance, and the color bar. The outbreak of the Second World War saw hemp required in hitherto unheard of quantities; and sisal, the raw product from which it is manufactured, became a commodity for the cultivation of which the bush was ransacked for workers. The white settlers grew fantastically rich, congratulated themselves on having colonized a gold mine, and tried to keep the 19th century going well into the 20th. That is, until the visit of Mr. John Dugdale.

A LEADING local resident in Arusha planned to do honor to the distinguished visitor and have the cream of local society meet him and discuss the colony's problems and hopes—by both of which they meant aid to the European element. Nobody else was considered to have any problems. The Europeans, though they could hardly be said to have fallen on hard times, were experiencing a little more difficulty in marketing their crops in peacetime. They wanted an assurance from the British government that their trade was safe, and were anxious to strengthen their position amid the general native unrest in Africa.

A cocktail party was, therefore, arranged at a leading hotel. The colonists, impeccably attired for the occasion, mustered in force. The minister was coming with his wife. It would be nice to see what the current London fashions were like. As it happened, Mr. Dugdale telephoned the hotel just before the party. He asked whether the establishment was open to Africans—colored Africans. He was informed that this hotel, like many others throughout Tanganyika, allowed no Africans—or Indians—in except as servants. Mr. Dugdale declined to join the party. He could not, he said, go to any public building or attend any function where the color bar operated.

With eyebrows raised below tropical topees, the British colony got together in haste to decide on the next move. This minister was not only a socialist, which was bad

enough; he was also impolite. They organized another party for the guest, this time in a private home where questions of racial prejudice could be neither raised nor answered. Here the minister duly arrived, and the conversation, to judge from reports reaching London, was generally cool and commonplace.

This only lasted for a few minutes, however. Soon one of the guests, who apparently had not merely gone through the motions of taking cocktails, tapped Mr. Dugdale on the shoulder and charged him with being a troublemaker, with showing intolerance for the white man's point of view, and with openly encouraging revolt among the natives. Such persons, it was pointed out, were not welcome in a peaceful and happy community like Arusha. Mr. Dugdale, after the fashion of 19th-century novelettes, promptly ordered his carriage, took a summary departure, and left everyone who mattered in Arusha standing. Another stronghold of race superiority began to sag groundwards.

NOT all the English communities in East Africa hold the same beliefs as those of the residents of Arusha. Mr. Dugdale, on his return to London, maintained that he found frequent examples of generosity to the natives and of equality of status. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that 17,000,000 colored Africans have been given their first hope in a situation that has persistently failed to secure enough attention.

A struggle is rapidly developing in East Africa between the large majority seeking elementary rights and the few who wish to maintain the status quo. Opinion was divided in London as to the wisdom of a minister of the crown making so open a gesture in favor of human rights. How far, after all, was Mr. Dugdale's government prepared to go, it was asked. The Africans might suspect that the walls of repression had tumbled down, and the next step was not simple equality, but independence; and Britain was not just now in a mood to give away any more of her colonies.

It is not the old-fashioned concept of im-

perialism which causes Britain to cling to her African colonies—quite the contrary, as can be seen from recent developments in West Africa where both the Gold Coast and Nigeria are undergoing in slow motion that “transfer of power” accomplished with dispatch and under threat of revolution in India and Pakistan. The reasons for Britain’s retention of East Africa lie in the complex emotional tug of war that accompanies progress in multi-racial societies. The East African territories, like their neighbor Northern Rhodesia, are ruled by that agent of the British taxpayer, the Colonial Office, acting through its civil servants on the spot. But in fact decisions are made—or rather, official ordinances are effectively resisted—by the white settlers. These settlers take the view that they were encouraged to colonize the Empire, to set up homes, to create wealth, under the protection of London. Consequently, Britain’s responsibilities are twofold; she must honor an old pledge to the native of preparing him to rule himself, and she must safeguard the person and prosperity of the white who cannot think of African self-determination except in terms of white supremacy, as in South Africa. The ensuing pattern is crazy: the white settlers are repressing the natives, obstructing Britain, and clamoring for British protection all at once; and the Colonial Office stands between racial groups whose attitude towards each other is a mingling of fear, hate, and aggression.

VISITING East Africa almost at the same time as Minister Dugdale was another British member of parliament, Mr. Fenner Brockway. A veteran social revolutionary, Mr. Brockway did what no British public figure has so far had the courage to do. He stayed in the homes of native Africans throughout his trip. At Nairobi, capital of Kenya, 3,000 natives crowded into the airport to see the important Britisher who was not to stay at Government House, but with their own people. Mr. Brockway was refused a meal in a Nairobi restaurant because he wanted to dine with an Indian and an African friend. He discovered that five

restaurants had but lately had their licenses withdrawn for serving meals to mixed parties. He complained to the governor, a worried man who had last year to quell native riots by calling out the military. The governor hates prejudice, but he hates trouble more, and he sees a Black and Tan situation developing in which the Europeans could be massacred.

The European settlers in East Africa are not evil men. They are worried, perplexed, frustrated individuals and they are caught just now in the upthrust of a nationalism creating a political situation without precedent or parallel. The white settler regards each new demand by the African with foreboding. The colonial civil servant, on the other hand, is schooled to expect such difficulties and is more concerned with regulating the awakening giant than with frustrating him. He finds the settler’s prejudices unsophisticated, out of touch with modern life, and quaintly ignorant of the world as understood and preached by the young lecturers at the London School of Economics.

Sometimes, however, even the advanced theorists of the London School of Economics seem quaintly unsophisticated. East Africa is the most westerly outpost of the Indian diaspora. Indian “Zionism” (which is a matter for the Hindu rather than the Moslem) looks toward the motherland as the country where the oppressive Englishman was driven out, and the place to find both political strength and spiritual succor. The Indian of East Africa is economically successful and therefore generally unpopular. Also, he is educated, organized, and has considerable capacity for leadership. He gets on well enough socially with the African—who has no particular sense of racial inferiority towards Indians—and acts as a kind of intermediary between white and black. In these circumstances the Indian is all one would expect him to be: sensitive, proud, fascinated by Communism, resentful of the Englishman’s social domination.

The Indians have aligned themselves with the native Africans and are the articulate organs of native nationalism. They campaign

against discrimination and have taken all steps open to them to lift their own political status. They oppose limitation of Indian immigration and refuse to recognize any difference between the policy of the British government and the conduct of the British settlers. Yet, ironically enough, should there be a pogrom in East Africa, it will be directed not against the whites but against the Indians. For it is they who own the shops and run the bazaars at which the natives buy and to which they are in debt; the Europeans live way up in the mountain strongholds.

AFRICA is now emerging from a society of strata, of one race sitting upon another, to a society of plurality, of one race living beside another. One of those characteristically foggy statements made periodically by British statesmen to keep the rest of the world guessing about their intentions, was recently uttered in the House of Commons:

"Our objective is self-government within the Commonwealth. Self-government must include proper provision for all the main communities which have made their home in East Africa but in the long run their security and well-being must rest on their good relations with each other. Good relations cannot flourish while there is fear and suspicion between the communities; it must therefore be our task to create conditions where that fear and suspicion disappear. In any constitutional changes in the direction of self-government, care must be taken to safeguard the proper rights and interests of all the different communities. Future policy must be worked out in full consultation with those who belong to the territories. . . ."

This pronunciamiento, like the Balfour Declaration on another occasion, poses more questions than it answers. It does not reveal how the British Colonial Office is to influ-

ence the whites who have the power in East Africa to accept a position of mere equality with the natives. Just before he died, Ernest Bevin described his government as "leading East Africa along the road traveled by India." A perfectly commendable statement, yet not the kind to reassure any sector of the local population: they each interpreted it according to their fears, not their aspirations.

Officially, Great Britain's attitude to the race problem of East Africa is to ignore it. It can carp at Dr. Malan in South Africa because he is the prime minister of an independent country, even though within the Commonwealth. But it cannot attract too much attention to the race problem in colonial provinces for which it is responsible politically to the British people and morally to the Trusteeship Council. The latest report issued by His Majesty's Government concerning its East African wards is 165 pages long. It deals with political progress since the war, regional collaboration, reconstruction, and the development of natural resources, social services, and community life, but not a word is recorded of the race problems within the territory.

What, therefore, did Minister Dugdale discover during his East African trip? He discovered that a showdown with the white settlers cannot for long be postponed. Five years ago this might have involved an abdication of power by the Colonial Office, as power has been all but abdicated to the white settlers in the Rhodesias. But today, with the aid of public opinion in Britain and international opinion at the United Nations, there is a chance that the showdown may produce a firm and statesman-like formula for progressive self-government in this plural community such as has already been achieved with considerable success in the case of the British West Indies.